recyclemore
WEST CONTRA COSTA INTEGRATED
WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

December 22, 2003

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SUBJECT: WCCSL BULK MATERIALS PROCESSING CENTER AND RELATED ACTIONS, DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Dear Deidra:

Following are comments from the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority on the subject EIR. We have looked at the document from the following perspectives:

- Conformance with the CEQA Guidelines;
- Discussion and analysis of the future and future value of the Central IRRF;
- Issues directly related to solid waste and recycling services in the Authority's jurisdiction;
- Matters of concern to the North Richmond and West Contra Costa communities, including environmental justice issues.

The comments are divided into two categories: 1. critical comments directly germane to the Authority's mission; and, 2. broader comments relevant to the larger West County community.

As always, if you have questions about this or any other matter, I welcome your call at (510) 215-3127.

Sincerely,

Steve Devine
Executive Director

Cc: Board of Directors Infrastructure/Strategic Planning Subcommittee
Board Chair Letitia Moore
Director Ed Balico
Director Gary Bell

Serving: The cities of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond and San Pablo and Unincorporated West Contra Costa County

Comments on WCCSL Bulk Materials Processing Center and Related Actions, Draft Environmental Impact Report

1. Critical Comments Directly Germane to the Authority's Mission

Alternatives

No-Project Alternative

The No-Project Alternative should clearly show the results of project non-approval. This should include a comparison of future conditions with the project, and future conditions without the project. CEQA Guidelines (15126.6 (B) and (C)) states that, "...where failure to proceed with the project will not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical setting" (15126.6(B). The following paragraph of the Guidelines states that, "After defining the no project alternative..., the lead agency should proceed to analyze the impacts of the no project alternative by projecting what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services" (15126.6 (C)).

Clearly, in this case, if the project is not approved, the landfill will still be required to close. Therefore, the no-project discussion in the DEIR should discuss the environmental consequences of non-approval of the project by clearly showing the reduction in traffic and air emissions that will result when the landfill closes, and when only those operations currently permitted to operate at the landfill (including the current composting, inerts processing, wood processing, and soil remediation facilities) and at the Central IRRF remain in operation. This will provide the public and decision-makers with clear information on the consequences of project approval and non-approval. 8-1

The no-project alternative analysis includes the statement on page 13-5 that with this alternative, "a large increase in resource recovery processing capacity would not occur... at WCCSL." However, there is no analysis in the document that such capacity is needed. The scale of operations that make up the existing BMPC appears to be sufficient to meet the needs of West Contra Costa County. It is not clear from the DEIR where additional materials might come from if these facilities are expanded to many times there current capacity, as is proposed in the project. It is clear to us, but not discussed in the "Environmental Considerations" or "Comparison with Project" sections of the no-project alternative discussion, that the no-project alternative would result in a much smaller scale of operations at the WCCSL, and a reliance on the IRRF, instead of the proposed WRC, for transfer and processing of West Contra Costa's waste. Since these are already permitted facilities that have been through CEQA review, there would be no additional impacts related to their future operation. Therefore, with the exception of the drainage problems that would be associated with not raising the height of the landfill to 160 feet, the no-project alternative would avoid or reduce all project-related impacts (assuming the Bay Trail would still be built). Because the no-project alternative would reduce or avoid nearly all project-related impacts, and still enable orderly and efficient processing and transfer of West Contra Costa's wastes, this should be evaluated as a potentially superior alternative. 8-2 8-3

Comments on Other Alternatives

The alternatives presented in the document do not constitute a "reasonable range" as required by the CEQA Guidelines (15126.6). Two of the alternatives, the alternative location for the WRC, and the alternative composting process, are not truly project alternatives, but merely minor variations on the same project. A third, the preferred environmental alternative, appears to be a combination of elements of the 8-4

other two alternatives, plus certain mitigation measures included in the impact analysis. It is not entirely clear from the discussion what the preferred environmental alternative consists of, how it compares to the project, and how it reduces project-related impacts. 8-5

In general, the analysis of impacts of each alternative, the ability of each alternative to meet project objectives, and comparison of alternatives with the project are uneven. There is no discernible reason that the Alternative Composting Process should receive such a thorough comparison (in Table 13-3), while the others do not. As suggested in the CEQA Guidelines (15126.6(d)), a matrix would be useful to summarize and compare characteristics and effects of the alternatives. This would provide the public and decision makers with a straightforward means of comparing the impacts and benefits of the alternatives and the proposed project. 8-6

Chapter 1 – Introduction

No comments

Chapter 2 – Summary

No comments

Chapter 3 – Project Description

No comments

Chapter 4 – Land Use Plans and Policies

Impact 4-2 examines the effects of discrete project impacts – noise, odor, public health, traffic and safety – on future users of the proposed Bay Trail, and finds that none of these would cause a significant impact. However, this impact should consider the essential incompatibility of the two types of land uses proposed by the project, large-scale resource recovery activities and recreational activities. The project proposes to put these in close proximity. While individual impacts – noise, odor, public health and safety – may fall below significance thresholds (and this is questionable; see especially comments on the Noise section), this does not diminish the fundamental incompatibility of uses in close proximity. Thus, while development of the trail is consistent with local plans and policies, development of the trail in conjunction with the proposed expanded and new operations at the closed landfill site is incompatible and in conflict with the established plan to develop the trail. Impact 4-2 should be identified as a significant impact, and appropriate mitigation measures developed. These might include minimum setbacks between trail segments and facility operations; reducing the scale of certain operations; and eliminating certain operations from the project. If the land use conflict cannot be resolved, the EIR should arrive at a conclusion that Impact 4-2 is significant and unavoidable. 8-7

An additional impact should be identified in the Land Use section regarding the potential impact of the WRC on diversion rates. While the project proposes to recover a portion of the materials processed at the WRC, the WRC's operator may decide to suspend recovery of those materials for purely economic reasons. This could result in a reduction in the diversion rate, which could have a significant impact on the ability of West Contra Costa communities to achieve the mandated 50 percent diversion rate. This would conflict with the adopted RIWMP and CIWMP, and would therefore be a significant impact. A mitigation measure should be identified that would require as a condition of the land use permit that the WRC recover for recycling a minimum portion of the waste received. This would ensure that there is no decrease in the diversion rate, and so would mitigate the impact to less-than-significant. 8-8

Impact 4-5 does an excellent job of analyzing the potential of the project to increase illegal dumping in the North Richmond area, and of discussing the environmental justice issues at stake. We also applaud

the identification of a host mitigation fee in Mitigation Measure 4-5. The Land Use section should, however, include a more general discussion of the environmental justice implications of the project, particularly related to the potential cumulative impacts of permitting and operating the proposed project, along with the already-permitted IRRF and the West Contra Costa Sanitary Landfill (WCCSL) 8-9A

For many years, the North Richmond community has been expecting the WCCSL to close and to be converted to a use or uses that would enhance the community, including recreational open space. Instead, the applicant is proposing to begin receiving and transferring wastes at a new WRC, and to expand greatly the capacity of the existing Bulk Materials Processing Center (BMPC). In addition, the IRRF could, under its existing permits, be built out so that it could handle its permitted capacity of 1,200 tons of waste per day. Furthermore, the landfill itself is not required to close until January 2006, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board's order to close the landfill could be rescinded or modified. It is therefore possible, under a "worst case scenario" that all of these facilities would be operating at capacity at the same time.

Table 1 compares the capacities of the permitted and proposed waste processing facilities in West Contra Costa County. As this table indicates, if the project is approved, there would be permitted capacity for processing an additional 1.32 million tons per year of waste. The majority of the increase (over 1 million tons) would come from the greatly-expanded BMPC. In all, there would be capacity for processing or disposing nearly 3 million tons of waste per year, or nearly 8,000 tons per day, seven days per week. According to the WCCIWMA's recent waste generation study, the five cities included in the West Contra Costa Regional Agency (not including unincorporated areas) generated 358,704 tons of waste (both disposed and diverted) in 2001. The unincorporated areas of West Contra Costa County likely generated about 10 percent of this amount, so that the entire region generated about 400,000 tons of waste in 2001. The capacity of the proposed WRC and the expanded BMPC alone exceed this amount by over 1 million tons per year. The permitted capacity of all facilities combined would exceed the waste generation of West Contra Costa County by over 2.4 million tons per year. 8-9B

The proposed expanded BMPC, the WRC, the IRRF, and the landfill could provide transfer, recovery, and disposal capacity for wastes from communities beyond West Contra Costa. Their combined capacity would create one of the largest waste processing, transfer, and disposal complexes in Northern California. North Richmond has for many years hosted far more than its share of polluting industries, could face many decades as the waste processing capital of the Bay Area. This constitutes an environmental injustice issue, and should be identified as a significant cumulative impact. The following mitigation measures should be included in the Final EIR:

A. The West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority (The Authority) currently has a contract (the IRRF Service Agreement) with West County Resource Recovery Inc. to use the IRRF for the transfer of Authority-controlled franchised waste from the Cites of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, and portions of Unincorporated West Contra Costa County. Aside from the IRRF Service Agreement, the Authority has a separate contract with WCCSL Inc. for handling self-hauled waste at a facility at the landfill site. These existing arrangements are consistent with the current County IWMP, and with the WCCIWMA Regional IWMP planning documents. 8-10

The Authority has been exploring with Republic Services the possibility of directing Authority-controlled franchised waste to the proposed WRC, instead of to the IRRF. At the time this letter is being submitted, there is no agreement of the parties for the Authority to use the proposed facility. The Authority's interests in the IRRF include the region's need for reliable waste transfer and processing, the $17 million of the ratepayers' money that is being invested in the IRRF, and the predictable future rates for waste transfer and disposal that are spelled out in the IRRF Service Agreement (which expires in 2014). The

Table 1
Summary of Permitted and Proposed Solid Waste Facility Capacities in West Contra Costa County

Facility	Function	Permitted Capacity	Proposed Capacity	Difference	Basis
Bulk Materials Processing Center (Open-Air Processing at the Landfill)					
	Composting	10,000	164,300	154,300	Tons per Year
	Concrete and Asphalt Processing	125,000	528,000	403,000	Tons per Year
	Wet/Dusty Materials Processing	-	51,100	51,100	Tons per Year
	Woodwaste Processing	30,000	131,400	101,400	Tons per Year
	Soil/Dredged Material Reclamaition	-	195,000	195,000	Tons per Year
	Biosolids Spreading	-	50,000	50,000	Tons per Year
Subtotal: BMPC		**165,000**	**1,119,800**	**954,800**	**Tons per Year**
Waste Recycling Center (New Transfer and Recovery Facility at the Landfill)	Transfer and Recovery	-	365,000	365,000	Tons per Year
Subtotal: BMPC plus WRC	**See Above**	**165,000**	**1,484,800**	**1,319,800**	**Tons per Year**
Landfill	Landfill, waste shuttle	912,500	912,500	-	Tons per Year
IRRF	Transfer and Recovery	438,000	438,000	-	Tons per Year
TOTAL ALL FACILITIES (Tons per Year)	**ALL FUNCTIONS**	**1,515,500**	**2,835,300**	**1,319,800**	**Tons per Year**
TOTAL ALL FACILITIES (Tons per Day)	**ALL FUNCTIONS**	**4,152**	**7,768**	**3,616**	**Tons per Day**

Authority would only agree to direct Authority-controlled franchised waste to the proposed WRC if these interests are adequately addressed. In addition, the Authority is aware of opposition within the North Richmond community to using the IRRF as a transfer station. 8-11

Accordingly, for economic, environmental, and environmental justice reasons, the EIR should recognize that the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County and the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority each has a role in the orderly planning of appropriately sited waste transfer and processing facilities, and in the avoidance of development of excess waste capacity in the area. Specifically, each of these three public entities should take steps to ensure that there is only one permitted transfer station in the area. This can be accomplished through the following actions, which should be stated as mitigation measures in the Final EIR:

1. Assuming that the Authority and Republic Services reach agreeable terms for use of the proposed WRC for transfer of Authority-controlled franchised waste, the applicant should be required to apply to the County to amend their use permit for the IRRF to remove the allowance to use the site as a solid waste transfer facility. If an agreement to transfer Authority-controlled franchised waste at the proposed WRC transfer facility cannot be reached, then the IRRF would be used for transfer of Authority-controlled franchised waste, as per the existing IRRF Service Agreement, and the WRC, if developed, should be sized and permitted only to handle self-haul waste. An appropriate size for a self-haul only WRC would be 500 tons per day. 8-12

2. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors or the Richmond City Council (depending on whether the WRC is sited in the unincorporated area or within the City limits) shall include as a condition of approval for the WRC that the WRC may not receive waste for transfer until the West Contra Costa Sanitary Landfill is closed, with the possible exception of a limited transition period during which a small amount of waste would continue to be accepted in order to complete the landfill's final grades. 8-13

3. The County should consider adoption of the Reduced Project Alternative, described below. 8-14

B. As a condition of approval, an appropriate host community mitigation fee would be imposed on all waste arriving at the WRC and expanded BMPC. 8-15

Chapter 5 – Geology, Soils Seismicity

No comments

Chapter 6 – Water Resources

No comments

Chapter 7 – Aesthetics and Visual Quality

No comments

Chapter 8 – Traffic and Circulation

p.8-8, D1: The statement that "There are no neighboring developments that would be directly affected by the new traffic..." appears to ignore the possible future concurrent use of the IRRF. This statement should be revised to incorporate mention of the IRRF. 8-16

p.8-8, D2a: The statement that "peak activity...occurs during the spring and the fall" does not appear to be substantiated by the tables in Appendix 8A, on pages 14 – 16 of that Appendix. The basis for that statement should be made clear, and the discrepancy with the tables should be explained. 8-17

p.8-15, D3: In this discussion of roadway and intersection capacity, existing conditions are used as the baseline. If the baseline should be reasonably anticipated future conditions under existing permits, then the use of the IRRF for (at least) local franchise-collected wastes should be incorporated into the baseline, for impact analysis purposes. 8-18

Chapter 8: There is no discussion of potential impacts of project-related traffic on roadway congestion on I-580 or I-80. This should be addressed in the Final EIR. 8-19

p. 8-25, E2a: The DEIR states "it is assumed that the 1,050 TPD would be entirely new traffic on the regional roadway system." However, the Project Description implies that when fully operational, the IRRF will receive local franchise-collected refuse and recyclables. This would not be new traffic; it is part of the very traffic that is used as the basis for describing the impacts of the proposed project. The DEIR should revise the aforementioned statement, and should quantify the extent to which refuse and recycling collection trucks that now unload at the WCCSL site would instead unload at the Central IRRF, as well as the extent to which the proposed project would be used by trucks that were not previously using the regional roadway system. This will identify the causes of increased traffic in the region and should enable the costs of any necessary mitigations to be assigned accordingly. 8-20

p. 8-26, 2nd paragraph: The discussion of ramp congestion does not clearly state whether the added congestion would exceed a significance criterion, but it does appear to consider this a possibility. This determination should be made more explicitly; and if a criterion is exceeded, a specific mitigation should be required of the proposed project, rather than assuming that the Central IRRF will manage its peak hour trucks. 8-21

Chapter 9 – Biological Resources

No comments

Chapter 10 – Air Quality and Odor

No comments

Chapter 11 – Health and Safety

No comments

Chapter 12 – Noise

No comments

2. Broader Comments Relevant to the Larger West County Community

Alternatives

Reduced Project Alternative

A "Reduced Project" alternative that would examine a project with similar elements, but at a smaller scale, should be considered. This could include a modest increase in the capacity of the existing BMPC processing facilities. The current capacity of the BMPC's functions (composting, wood waste processing, 8-22

concrete and asphalt processing is, according the DEIR, 165,000 tons per year. The applicant proposes to expand existing functions and add new functions, resulting in an increase in annual capacity to 1.12 million tons per year, an increase of nearly 1 million tons (see Table 1). Under the Reduced Project Alternative, the capacity of the BMPC would be increased by a sufficient amount to meet the demands of West Contra Costa County, plus enough extra capacity to accommodate a modest amount of materials from outside the region. The total amount of the increase would be 55,000 tons per year, or one third of the existing capacity.

The Reduced Project Alternative could also eliminate those project elements that have a greater potential to harm the environment. This alternative would include a height increase for the landfill necessary to ensure adequate drainage.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

No comments

Chapter 2 – Summary

No comments

Chapter 3 – Project Description

The figures in the project description are difficult to use. Lack of a scale bar on maps causes uncertainty about scale, especially when the maps are recopied. A scale bar should be added, and simpler hatching and text should be used to improve legibility. Where fine detail is called for, maps should be produced in 11x17 inch size. 8-23

Also, the figures are inconsistent in describing the location of dredged material and biosolids spreading areas. Or is it drying areas? The name of this area and its extent should be made consistent wherever it appears in the Section 3 figures. The comments below on the visual impacts section assume that Figure 3-7 shows all of the areas where these materials would be spread to dry. 8-24

Figure 3-5 is too general to provide an understanding of site circulation. It shows roadways but does not show the routes of travel of various types of vehicles. Also, it does not show how those routes would be affected by the alternate use of Area A for the WRC. It would be helpful to see how the general public will navigate through the site safely among other traffic streams. The routes of travel for the major traffic streams should be shown on a map of the site. A second map should show the routes of travel for the case when the WRC is located in Area A. 8-25

In addition to Table 3-1 and 3-3, the project description should include a table that clearly compares the current and proposed daily and annual permitted waste quantities for each project element. The project description should also provide information on the current and projected waste stream in West Contra Costa County, and the anticipated volume of waste that would be coming to the facility from outside of West County. 8-26

Page 3-23, first paragraph under Section 2g. Biosolids/Dredged Material Spreading, the 2nd sentence with the reference to Appendix 3G should be changed to Section 2f. Soil Reclamation. 8-27

Chapter 4 – Land Use Plans and Policies

No comments.

Chapter 5 – Geology, Soils Seismicity

Mitigation Measures 5-5 and 5-6 state that "additional geotechnical studies would be performed" to evaluate landfill stability and settlement at the location of proposed new or remodeled structures. Such future studies as mitigation measures are not consistent with CEQA Guidelines, since they could lead to deferral of the formulation of mitigation measures to a future time (Guidelines 15126.4(a)(1)(B)). These studies should be performed prior to CEQA review, so that the results may be considered in the EIR, and so that specific mitigation measures can be proposed, if necessary. Alternatively, as allowed in the same section of the Guidelines, performance standards may be specified in lieu of specific measures. 8-28

Chapter 6 – Water Resources

No comments

Chapter 7 – Aesthetics and Visual Quality

p.7-7, D1: The statement that "direct damage to scenic resources" is not a significance criterion should be substantiated. To the extent that the post-closure use of the landfill is currently designated as open space, it may be argued that the landfill itself will become a scenic resource after closure. Apparently the current permits anticipate some ongoing operations after closure, but this (or other rationale) should be stated. (CEQA guidelines 15128). Otherwise, the analysis should include the aesthetic effects of changing the post-closure use to ongoing waste recovery and processing operations. 8-29

p. 7-8, D2b: A view 1b is needed, using viewpoint 1 as the point of view but looking northwest (same bearing as viewpoint 2). This view 1b should be used to show the visual and aesthetic impact, if any, of biosolids and dredged material spreading and drying on the southern slopes of the closed landfill. These materials are likely to be dark in color and to strongly contrast with the appearance of other slopes on and off the project site. A pair of color photos similar to Figures 7-4 and 7-5 (but aimed northwest) should be used to simulate the appearance of the site with and without this spreading operation. If the effect on the scenic quality of this vista is substantially adverse, then a mitigation measure limiting the extent of this operation in this area should be considered. 8-30

p.7-10, D3: The statement that "users of the Trail are not considered to be sensitive receptors, as their presence would be elective and short term" appears to dismiss Trail users without considering that during their presence on the Trail, these users would have ¼ to ½ of their field of view occupied by the facility. The Trail was established to meet a local need (for outdoor experiences with, among other things, scenic vistas), and the proposed project appears to reduce the ability of the Trail to meet that need in the future. This discussion should acknowledge that the project site is part of the scenic resource to which the trail provides access, and that one function of the Trail is to provide a visually attractive setting for walking outdoors. Several of the operations should be more closely examined for their potential visual impact and these impacts minimized. For example, the double-stacked containers that will enclose the processing area for wet and dusty wastes should be painted a uniform color that blends well with the surroundings. 8-31

Also, Figure 7-5 should show, perhaps as a wire frame model, the silhouette of the WRC in its alternate location on Area A. A figure similar to 7-10 should be used in the same manner, so that the appearance of the WRC at Area A, and its contrast with its surroundings, can be fully understood. 8-32

Chapter 8 – Traffic and Circulation

General comment: Improper Baseline Used in Air Quality and Traffic Analyses

The DEIR uses an improper baseline for determining the significance of several impacts, and thereby understates the severity of impacts. This occurs most notably in the Air Quality and Traffic sections. In the Air Quality analysis (Chapter 10), Table 10-4 estimates "Existing Project-Generated Emissions" from 8-33

currently permitted activities at the WCCSL (presumably this refers to emissions from currently permitted operations, not from the "existing project" as the project is not yet approved). Future project-generated emissions are then estimated for the year 2008 (when the WRC is assumed to operate at 85% of capacity and other operations at 75% of capacity) and for 2015, when all operations are assumed to operate at 100% of capacity. These estimates are shown in Table 10-5 and Table 10-6. These tables compare future project emissions to those estimated for currently permitted operations, which apparently include landfill operations, and only the incremental difference is used to determine the significance of impacts. For example, Existing NOx emissions are given as 720.3 pounds per day in Table 10-4; then, in Table 10-5, Year 2008 project NOx emissions are given as 633.9 pounds per day, a decrease of 86.4 pounds per day. A similar approach is taken to the analysis of traffic impacts in Chapter 8 (see pages 8-8 through 8-13), which shows a relatively modest increase in traffic volume under project conditions in 2008 and 2015, compared to current operations.

The landfill is required by order of the Regional Water Quality Control Board to close on or before January 31, 2006. The project, including operation of the WRC, is expected to begin operation in 2005. The CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to describe the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time of the notice of preparation, and that these will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which the significance of an impact is determined (CEQA Guidelines 15125(a)). However, in the case of this project, the closure of the landfill, which is clearly foreseeable at about the same time the project, if approved, would be implemented, will have a major bearing on the physical environmental conditions of the area. The approach taken in the document to the air quality and traffic analyses seriously underestimates the impacts of the proposed project, by "trading off" existing landfill emissions and traffic for future project emissions and traffic.

The EIR should therefore include an analysis of the following:

1. The incremental increase in emissions that will occur if the project becomes operational prior to closure of the landfill, in other words, an analysis of the significance of the impacts to air quality and traffic from the currently-permitted operation plus the proposed project. This would be a short-term impact, only until the landfill ceases accepting waste for disposal, but could still result in short-term significant impacts, most notably air quality impacts, over a period of several months;

2. Since the landfill is required to close no later than January 1, 2006, the comparisons in Table 10-5 and 10-6 should be only against those operations that are permitted to be operating at that time. In other words, the emissions and traffic related to landfill operations should be eliminated from the comparison, since the foreseeable future condition is that the landfill would close.

3. Alternatively, the analysis suggested in 2, above, could be presented against the analysis that currently appears in the document, to provide a comparison of current conditions against likely future conditions. However, the methods used, and the actual comparison being made, should be explicit in the document, in order to provide the public and the decision makers with needed information in assessing the actual impacts of the project.

Other Comments on Chapter 8 – Traffic and Circulation

p.8-7, D1: The basis for the statement that "There is adequate emergency access and parking that would be provided for the Public Access Trail" should be given. Appendix 3K states that a graveled parking area will be available but does not give its extent or the estimated number of spaces that would be available for trail users. 8-34

p.8-9, Table 8-4: In the rightmost column, the count of 620 daily vehicles at the existing WCCSL in the "all other vehicles" category, i.e. including employees, visitors and suppliers, is not credible and should be explained. Is there some other type of vehicle in this count? The footnotes should explain, and the relevance of that vehicle type to the proposed project should be made clear. 8-35

p.8-18, D3, Control Measures Incorporated by Applicant: The control measures should be described in greater detail, and it should be demonstrated that they will accomplish the intended degree of traffic management. The DEIR should explain if most of the vehicles coming to the proposed project are under the direct control of the applicant, for example, if they are operated by an affiliated company. If they are not, then how would these controls be applied? 8-36

p. 8-20, Mitigation Measure 8-3 (pavement monitoring): The adequacy of this mitigation measure alone is questionable, because it does not provide any assurance that the impact (damaged pavement) will be mitigated, and because it does not cite or set standards for pavement condition. The mitigation should enable the City or County to set such standards, based on commonly accepted standards such as MicroPAVER (ASTM D6433-99). Also, establishment of a Parr Blvd Repair Fund should be considered, to which the project would annually contribute 10% of the estimated cost to rebuild the intersection each year. The fund would be used when the required monitoring indicates the need. If the fund balance reaches 100%, contributions could be suspended until drawdown occurs. 8-37

p. 8-22, top (item (b)): Signage and striping alone may not provide sufficient safety for pedestrians, particularly from departing project customers, which are likely to drive at higher speeds than arriving customers. Pedestrian activated warning lights or flashing beacons should be added to the signage. The DEIR should indicate whether the City of Richmond or Contra Costa County has pedestrian crossing standards or guidelines that pertain to this situation. Sections 4K and 4L of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices describe some warning light options. 8-38

Appendix 8A, p.4: The table shows inbound and outbound traffic during the period November 2002 – January 2003. To provide a sound basis for the impact analysis, the Appendix should answer the following questions: Is this table representative of conditions throughout the year? If not, how has it been (or should it be) adjusted? Also, why are fewer daily average vehicles leaving than entering? Where did the 17 "missing" vehicles go? 8-39

Appendix 8A, p.6: The table shows a surprising amount of traffic between 6PM and 6AM. To provide a sound basis for the impact analysis, the Appendix should answer the following questions: Is that traffic unique to the sampling period or typical for the area? Has it been taken into account in the DEIR analyses? 8-40

Appendix 8A, p.16: The table shows an unusual surge in commercial traffic from August 12 through 15. To provide a sound basis for the impact analysis, the Appendix should answer the following questions: Was that a one-time event or does it occur annually? Was it incorporated into the analyses or "backed out"? 8-41

Chapter 9 – Biological Resources

No comments

Chapter 10 – Air Quality and Odor

Please refer to the "General Comment" under Traffic and Circulation, above.

Page 10-3, last paragraph. The 2nd and 3rd sentences should be modified as follows:

> The closest monitoring station to the WCCSL is located in San Pablo (a few miles east~~west~~ of the WCCSL site). Table 10-3 summarizes air quality data from this monitoring site during the period ~~1999-2001~~2000-2002. 8-42

Page 10-6, 1st paragraph, last sentence. Delete the word "also" from the sentence. 8-43

Page 10-7, 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence, "BAAMD" should be corrected to "BAAQMD". 8-44

Page 10-8, Section B.2.b. Odor. The BAAQMD is responsible for regulating odors at all areas of the landfill, with the exception of odors from the composting/co-composting operations. In accordance with AB 59, which became law in 1995, odors from composting operations are regulated by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) through the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA). Odors associated with other activities at the landfill (e.g., landfilling, green waste and wood waste processing, and sludge handling) are regulated by the BAAQMD. This clarification should be made either under this section or in a new section that discusses the LEA's specific regulatory authority. 8-45

Page 10-12, Section D.2.a. Process Emissions. The DEIR does not include sufficient information to confirm the accuracy of the emissions estimates made for existing, 2008 and 2015 scenarios. Specifically, the DEIR discusses that existing emissions from equipment used in the concrete/asphalt recycling and composting operations were adjusted to reflect the proposed increase in annual throughputs for those operations. Also, the EIR states that emissions from soil reclamation, biosolids/dredged materials spreading, and wet dusty materials blending operations were calculated using the BAAQMD emission factors for soil handling. The information contained in Appendix 10A for these processes is presented in summary format with no detail. The only detailed emissions calculations included in Appendix 10A are those for off-road and on-road equipment operation. 8-46

Further, the DEIR emissions inventory should have included a more detailed discussion of emissions associated with composting operations. Recent studies and information produced by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the CIWMB have focused on quantifying and measuring ROG emissions from composting/co-composting activities. These studies suggest that composting/co-composting activities may be a *significant* source of ROG emissions. In 2002, the SCAQMD published a draft Technology Assessment on various composting methods (including windrow composting of green/wood waste materials and biosolids co-composting) that establishes composite emission factors of 3.8 and 1.78 pounds of ROG per ton of green/wood material and mixed putrescibles (including food waste, and biosolids mixed with green/wood waste) composted by windrow method, respectively. These composite emission factors reflect total emissions during the active and curing phases of composting.

In an effort to measure the accuracy of the seemingly high ROG emission factor developed by SCAQMD for green waste composting facilities, the CIWMB has conducted independent source testing at the same green waste processing facilities where SCAQMD conducted source testing (the CIWMB did not, however, test emissions from co-composting operations). The results of the testing are summarized in two recently published Technical Summary Reports. Using a different air emissions test method than the SCAQMD, the CIWMB study found ROG emissions from green waste composting by windrow method to be roughly 27 percent of those measured by SCAQMD. As such, emissions from existing and proposed composting operation could be significant and could cause an exceedance of the BAAQMD's 80 lbs/day criterion for ROG. The emissions inventories in Tables 10-4 through 10-6 should be re-worked to include composting emissions. 8-47

Lastly, the process emission calculations do not include fugitive landfill gas emissions that are not captured and treated. It is unreasonable to assume that the landfill gas collection system (LGCS) at the site is 100 percent effective in capturing landfill gas. Typical collection systems have a roughly 75 to 80 percent rate of capture. Similarly, the landfill gas combustion system is likely to be about 95 to 99 percent efficient in destroying landfill gas. Without the addition of fugitive landfill gas emissions and non-combusted emissions from the LGCS, the emissions estimates contained in Table 10-4 through 10-6 may substantially understate the amount of ROG emissions generated at the site and should be re-worked. 8-48

Page 10-13, Section B.2.c. On-Road Vehicle Exhaust. The emissions from on-road vehicle use should include re-entrained road dust on paved roads. The heading of this section should also be revised to read "On-Road Vehicle Emissions." The emissions inventories in Tables 10-4 through 10-6 should be re-worked to include an estimate of on-road re-entrained road dust emission using the BAAQMD-recommended 0.69 grams of PM-10 per vehicle mile traveled or other appropriate ARB or USEPA factor to estimate these emissions. 8-49

Also, it does not appear that the assumed trip lengths for future 2008 and 2015 scenarios are any different than those used for the existing scenario. It seems that at a minimum the length of transfer trailer trips that will be transferring refuse once the LF is closed to Potrero Hills LF would increase significantly, and would be well above the trip lengths assumed in this air quality analysis. As such, ROG, NOx and PM-10 emissions could be substantially higher in 2008 and 2015 than shown in Table 10-5 and 10-6, respectively. The emissions inventories in Tables 10-5 and 10-6 should be re-worked to include the expected increase in VMT in future years. 8-50

Page 10-17, 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence should be modified as follows: 8-51
"Two separate model runs were constructed."

Page 10-24, Impact 10-4. Based on the above-described comments regarding the accuracy of the emissions estimates conducted for this EIR, it is possible that the project could result in exceedances of the BAAQMD's 80 lbs/day threshold for ROG and NOx. Because the DEIR analysis does not include quantification of composting emissions, fugitive landfill gas, and the net increase in VMT, it is assumed that the actual emissions at the site may exceed the emissions that have been accounted for in the most recent emissions inventory that serves as the basis for air quality planning in the region. As such, the project could impede the region's ability to reach attainment for ozone. 8-52

Impact 10-9, 2nd paragraph. There is no Section A5 in the Air Quality and Odor section. Please correct cross-reference. 8-53

Page 10-34, Cumulative Impacts. Based on the above-described comments regarding the accuracy of the emissions estimates conducted for this DEIR, it is possible that the project could result in exceedances of the 80 lbs/day thresholds for ROG and NOx. As such, the project could also result in significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts for ROG and NOx. 8-54

Chapter 11 – Health and Safety

Page 11-7, 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence, "WCSL" should be corrected to "WCCSL". 8-55

Page 11-18, D.1 Impacts Considered not to be Significant. The following significance criteria should be added to the list: 8-56

"Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized area or where residences are intermixed with wildlands."

Impact 11-6 (page 11-27), 1st paragraph. The following sentence is repeated twice in the paragraph: 8-57

"Both outdoor and indoor air in the natural environment contain all of the microorganisms, in variable amounts, that are associated with composting." Delete one of the two sentences.

Chapter 12 – Noise

Page 12-3, 2nd paragraph. This paragraph should be modified to clarify that stationary point sources of noise, including stationary mobile sources such as idling vehicles, attenuate at a rate of 6 to 7.5 dBA per doubling of distance from the source, depending on environmental conditions (i.e., atmospheric conditions and noise barriers, either vegetative or manufactured, etc.). Widely distributed noise, such as a large industrial facility spread over many acres or a street with moving vehicles, would typically attenuate at a lower rate, approximately 3 to 4.5 dBA. 8-58

Pages 12-5, Section A.2. Existing Conditions. It would be helpful to the reader if short- and long-term measurement data were summarized in a table and the locations where measurements were taken shown on a corresponding figure. The figure should also show the location of the project site and noise measurement locations relative to nearby noise-sensitive receptors. Also, more detail on those measurements that were collected such as duration, time of day, and day of week would have made the data more meaningful. Further, the EIR does not include detailed noise measurement data in the Appendices. A brief table showing the hourly Leqs measured over a 24-hour period would have been meaningful information to provide. 8-59

Page 12-7, Section B.2, Local, 1st paragraph. This section should describe whether or not the County also has a noise ordinance that would apply to the project. 8-60

Page 12-9, Section C. Significance Criteria, last paragraph. The last sentence does not express a time period or noise descriptor for the 3 dB increase in noise. That would suggest that a 3 dBA increase in an hourly Leq or DNL noise level would be significant. A distinction here is important; particularly during nighttime hours when expanded facility hours could have an adverse effect on noise levels at sensitive receptor locations along haul routes and closest to the project site. 8-61

Also, nowhere in the noise section is it acknowledged that the noise environment at residential locations along haul routes providing access to and from the site are well above the City- and County-recommended 60 DNL standard for residential uses. 8-62

Impact 12-4 and Section E. Cumulative Impacts. It is unclear how it was determined that noise from increased truck activity during nighttime hours would be less than significant. Detailed model outputs were not included in the EIR – it is impossible to determine whether modeling assumptions and conclusions are accurate. Modeling should take into account the use of large transfer trailers in the future. 8-63

END OF COMMENTS
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